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MILITARY, GUERRILIA ACTIVITY DEVELOPS IN BULGARIA

Military Activity

Recently arrived immigrants report that most military units in Danubian towns such as Ruse and Nikopol have been shifted to the west, leaving behind only antiaircraft units. Civilians are reportedly no longer allowed to use the large bridge at the village of Kula near Vidin. Other immigrants report that a cordon of soldiers surrounds the ports of Varna and Burgaz, and that large quantities of Soviet military equipment were given to the Bulgarian Army following the end of army maneuvers in the Sliven area a month ago. One report states that in accordance with an order received from Moscow, the Soviet uniform has been approved for all echelons of the Bulgarian army.

One recently arrived immigrant has reported seeing a 40-car train carrying tanks and guns marked with the hammer and sickle. It is believed that these preparations are not directed at Yugoslavia alone because it was reported recently that trenches were being dug and various units deployed along the Greek

Reports reaching Edirne state that the Bulgarians have built fortifications along the Turkish, Greek, and Yugoslav borders and have begun blackouts in some towns and cities situated near the Yugoslav border.(2) Greek intelligence sources report that small villages along the Greek and Turkish borders have been converted into military areas.(3)

Information received by Greek intelligence officials indicates that the Soviets have told the Bulgarian government to expect Yugoslav aggression shortly. Newly arrived refugees are saying that all letters are now being consored in Bulgaria.(4)

During the week preceeding 3 April, numbers of labor battalions were transported through Vratsa and Berkovitsa towards the Yugoslav border in military vehicles ... Reports reaching Edithe indicate that similar activity is occurring near the Greek and Turkish borders. In an attempt to conceal this activity, the Bulgarians are transporting immigrants to the Turkish border after nightfall. (3)

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Guerrilla Activity

According to statements of persons newly arrived in Edirne from Bulgaria, clashes between government forces and guerrilla bands have gradually increased to the point where they have taken on the nature of a civil war. More than 17,000 have fled to the mountains from the Sofia area along. Sixteen influential political prisoners were recently spirited away from the Lovech Prison by one guerrilla organization and are now reportedly directing the activities of certain guerrilla bands. The extent of guerrilla activity has led the Bulgarian government to send large military units against the guerrillas.

As a move to placate the people, the government recently abolished the ration system for some items; but since prices for these items immediately skyrocketted, the people only become more dissatisfied.(1)

SOURCES

- 1. Istanbul, Cumhuriyet, 7 Apr 51
- 2. Istanbul, Cumhuriyet, 9 Apr 51
- 3. Izmir, Yeni Asir, 4 Apr 51 4. Istanbul, Vatan, 9 Apr 51

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